<u>Project CENTERN (Centralized Internship Program)</u>

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

**Executive Summary**—*Creating a centralized internship management program for better tracking and consistent administration of internships for students at the University of Virginia's College at Wise.*

This proposed program will assist the University of Virginia's College at Wise (UVa-Wise) in fulfilling the General Assembly's goal of increasing the tech talent pipeline by centralizing the College's internship management process, improving administration of its internship programs, and educating faculty and staff about internships opportunities across disciplines.

UVa-Wise's Office of Career Discovery and Planning serves students and alumni. This department's services help individuals transition to their post-college studies and careers. In addition to providing one-on-one coaching, the department shares job and internship opportunities with students and alumni. Staff members coordinate on-campus recruiting events to bring prospective employers and graduate school representatives face-to-face with students and alumni. Through its WiseWorks Internship Program, the department coordinates internships for students seeking careers in the technology sector. Students majoring in software engineering and computer science participate in this program. Most of the WiseWorks participants have completed their internships virtually.

Although Career Discovery serves the entire college, many academic departments coordinate their own internship programs. This decentralized structure makes it challenging to track internships across the institution, including technology internships that are not initiated through WiseWorks. The nature of this structure also makes it problematic for non-STEM faculty to share internship opportunities with technology majors who are students in their classes.

SCHEV's funding of this program will enable the college to continue contributing talent to Virginia's tech industry. Additionally, it will make it possible for UVa-Wise to increase experiential learning opportunities for its students in all majors.

*Project Description*

**Outcomes**—A centralized program infrastructure will improve the quality of experience for UVa-Wise students and employers who take part in internships by initiating consistent best practices in internship administration. It will build the college's capacity to track all internships, including those in the technology sector, as well as subsequent job offers and acceptances of employment, and it will expedite the institution's readiness to facilitate internships.

**Brief History**—Currently UVa-Wise does not have a centralized system to manage or track internships and resulting job offers and acceptances. A centralized system would be a new program for the college.

UVa-Wise Career Discovery and Planning (part of the Office of Economic Development and Engagement) coordinates the WiseWorks Internship Program. This program is part of the Wise Innovation Ecosystem funded by the University of Virginia's Strategic Investment Fund. WiseWorks partially subsidizes student wages for new technology companies that agree to offer

paid internships for STEM majors, particularly computer science and software engineering. These internships are tracked in an Excel spreadsheet.

The college has ten academic departments representing thirty majors. Some disciplines require students to complete internships, while other disciplines encourage internships but do not mandate them. Most of the internships coordinated through academic departments are unpaid for-credit experiences. A few of the departments have existing internship programs and employer agreements in place, including the Department of Math and Computer Science. Academic departments track internships in a variety of ways, including Excel spreadsheets, paper tracking, or platforms not designed for internship tracking, such as portfolio development software.

**Problem or Gap**—The ability to track internship experiences and subsequent employment is vital. This type of data enables UVa-Wise to recruit and retain students, engage parents and alumni, attract businesses for economic development, report outcomes to oversight organizations such as SCHEV and SACS, and prepare funding applications. Unfortunately, the decentralized structure of the various programs creates information silos, making it difficult to track internships across the institution.

Decentralization also creates inconsistency in the administration of internship programs, as each department has its own process. Internship coordinators may not have up-to-date training about best practices in internship program management, nor do they always have a good understanding of internship opportunities available through other departments.

**Solution**—A variety of enterprise application software solutions is available for tracking internships. Software that supports multiple administrative users would enable department internship coordinators to retain control of their individual programs while providing a bird's-eye view to college administrators for purposes of reporting, marketing, and recruiting.

Axiom Mentor Internship Management software can be managed by multiple users. Each administrator can manage internship records, assign students, and solicit feedback with custom evaluation surveys for both student interns and internship supervisors. Users can limit student access to available internships by major. For example, if a technology company seeks software engineering students, only software engineering majors will see that company's internship opportunity. Administrators can also make listings searchable by all students. The platform can be integrated with the college's student information system.

Administrators can capture pertinent employer information, including company name, description, contact information, codes and categories, location, pay rate, etc. They can also send a URL to prospective internship sites and ask that they input their own internship description and other related information. Included internships can be activated or de-activated and can be flagged as filled for a given semester.

Students can find relevant internships with an intuitive search form, which will return all applicable internships and direct students to the internship management office or to the internship site, as specified by administrators. Each back-end user is able to monitor and report how many students are assigned to internship sites each semester. Email tools facilitate communication to and from student interns and their internship supervisors.

The software allows administrators to create surveys to evaluate the internship experience (student) and student intern performance (supervisor), educational and career-path value to the

student, and workplace production value to the organization. Students and internship supervisors can instantly access the survey via a unique emailed URL and administers can compile and export results to Excel or other statistical program for analysis. In addition, internship supervisors can request a reflective paper or report from student interns, which can be uploaded to their internship records.

Once the software platform is in place, internship coordinators for each department will be identified and provided the opportunity for professional development. Training will include studies to help them adhere to best practices in internship program management. Other relevant topics of study might include how internships impact outcomes for first-generation students, how internships help students develop their soft skills, and how to engage employers. This training could be provided by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), the Southern Association of Colleges and Employers (SoACE), or the Virginia Association of Colleges and Employers (VACE), through on-site training or individual webinars, workshops, and conferences.

A committee composed of all internship coordinators will be formed to meet quarterly to discuss trends in talent acquisition, litigation issues, and changes in legislation or business practices that might impact internships. This committee will give internship program coordinators the occasion to learn about experiences available throughout the college. Coordinators will be encouraged to review all internships listed on the platform so they'll have a broader base of knowledge to provide resources to students not majoring in their discipline.

An outreach campaign will highlight the process improvement for internships and how it benefits employers and students. Activities may include employer-student meet-and-greet events, social media messages, classroom presentations, print collateral, and in-person and augmented reality tours of employer sites, the College's Oxbow Center, and the UVa-Wise campus.

**Milestones and Timeline—**

| OUTCOMES: Timeline and Milestones FY1 | SEP '19 | OCT '19 | NOV '19 | DEC '19 | JAN '20 | FEB '20 | MAR '20 | APR '20 | MAY '20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective 1: Implement enterprise application software for internship tracking** | | | | | | | | | |
| Purchase Internship Management Software | ▓ | ▓ | | | | | | | |
| Software installed by UVa-Wise Information Technology Team | | | ▓ | ▓ | | | | | |
| Internship coordinators identified and trained in how to use the platform | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | | |
| Internships for Spring/Summer 2019 entered into the platform's database | | | ▓ | ▓ | | | | | |
| Students recruited for Spring and Summer Internships | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ |
| **Objective 2: Provide professional development for internship coordinators** | | | | | | | | | |
| Internship management training (webinars and best practice manuals) | | | | ▓ | ▓ | ▓ | | | |
| SOACE conference (4 attendees) | | | | ▓ | | | | | |
| VACE conference (4 attendees) | | | | | | | | ▓ | |
| Training in other pertinent internship topics | | | | | | | ▓ | | ▓ |
| **Objective 3: Create Internship Coordinator Committee** | | | | | | | | | |
| Initial meeting to determine roles, set meeting schedule | | | | | ▓ | | | | |
| **Objective 4: Launch outreach campaign to highlight process improvement** | | | | | | | | | |
| Meet with College Relations and Marketing staff to create campaign | | | | ▓ | ▓ | | | | |
| Roll out outreach campaign | | | | | ▓ | ▓ | | | |

**Conclusion**—SCHEV funding will enable UVa-Wise to improve its management and tracking of internships, contributing to a more positive experience for each intern. This is in direct alignment with the Tech Talent Investment Program's goal of improving the readiness of graduates to be employed in technology-related fields and fields that align with traded-sector growth opportunities identified by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership.

*Budget and Budget Narrative*

| DIRECT COSTS | 09/01/19-05/31/20 |
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| | |
| Materials and Supplies | $6,700.00 |
| Service Contracts (software) | $7,000.00 |
| Printing (other than stationery) | $2,000.00 |
| Photocopying | $500.00 |
| Participant Support Costs | $18,500.00 |
| Other Direct Costs | $5,300.00 |
| **TOTAL REQUEST** | **$40,000.00** |

**Budget Narrative**—$40,000 budget includes the following costs:

Materials and Supplies: $6700 for NACE "Building a Premier Internship Program" guide (11 copies) and NACE Internship Compensation guide (11 copies).

Service Contracts (software): $7000 for Axiom-Mentor Software (or similar software). Includes initial set up ($1000) and three years of annual subscription @ $2000 per year (Axiom-Mentor). Expense may vary if we choose a different software.

Printing (other than stationery): $2000 for print collateral to promote the improved internship process to students and employers.

Photocopy: $500 for miscellaneous copying expenses.

Participant Support Costs: $18500 includes NACE training on-demand webinars (including a Guide to Faculty for Ethical Recruiting and a Guide to Engage Employer Partners) and conference travel and attendance for SOACE (4 attendees) and VACE (4 attendees).

Other Direct Costs: $5300 for expenses associated with employer meet-and-greet events, presentations, and in-person and augmented reality tours of employer sites, the College's Oxbow Center, and the UVa-Wise campus.